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were willing to grant that the changes introduced by the young people were a part of the times and might not be so bad after all. In talking to these older women I noted a touch of envy, which I would not have suspected ten years ago.

In contrast to these changes many phases of the family system remained the same. These included the attitude of intolerance towards a childless couple, the role of the mother-in-law in the caring for infants, the parents' preference for boys, the reserve between father and the children, the continued dwelling of many married sons with their fathers, and the importance attached to being an older brother or sister in the family. The godparent relationship and the attitude towards the *svatovstvo* (in-law relationships) were still of major importance.

The moral standards remained relatively rigid, with continuing intolerance toward illegitimacy. The one such case within the past ten years[1] had caused a great amount of unfavorable comment. The mother resolved her predicament by leaving her child with relatives in the village and marrying in another place.

Many other traditional practices besides those related to the family still maintained their strong grip on the people. The Christmas Horo took place as always and the Sunday afternoon promenade had become more firmly established. The *babi* (older women) were called in whenever illness or childbirth occurred. The smaller families, of course, numbered fewer children these days, but the *babi* were kept just as busy since the state-employed midwife no longer worked for the Obshtina. The dead were buried much the same as formerly, although the priest forbade people to cry messages to the dead while the funeral procession paused at the crossroads on the way from the home to the church.

The people still made much of the mice and wolf holidays. One day after St. Dimiter's Day (November 9) the peasants continued to fast to keep the mice from coming in and eating up not only stored food but even clothes and other prized possessions. Bai Yurdan, the tailor, told me in all seriousness, "When I was in Sofia I didn't observe such holidays but now that I am back in the village I must."

[1] [ie. 1935 - 1945 -- Analyst]

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When I pressed him for his reasons, fully expecting him to say that he was yielding to the pressure of his wife or public opinion, he gravely replied:

"You see in Sofia I did not own any of my own cloth but now I have a great deal downstairs which I must protect from the mice." I might mention in passing that Bai Yurdan had become a faithful member of the Communist party.

The wolf holidays were still observed for three days following the Day of the Archangel Michael, which comes on November 21. During these days the peasants were careful to do no work and refused to cook or boil anything. Such rigid observances, they believed, protected their sheep from wolves, which were still numerous upon the mountain.

One event of overshadowing importance in the changes which had occurred in Dragalevtsy since 1937 had been its incorporation in Greater Sofia in 1939. Even though their village was close to Sofia, Dragalevtsy people had always considered themselves quite apart, and looked upon Sofia ways as alien ways. However, Sofia politicians managed to bring the village under the sway of the city's municipality. Most villagers considered this an evil day in the history of their community and could cite a number of disadvantages which had occurred as a result. One of the village officials, whom I had known previously, complained particularly about the following points:

1. The city municipality had taken over the forests.

2. It had taken over the meadows which the peasants owned in common. For instance, the villagers no longer did the haying in the meadows which used to belong to the school because all of the revenue from the sale of this hay went to the Sofia School Fund. This meant that the three Dog Days,[1] described in an earlier chapter, were once more days of idleness.

3. Formerly the Dragalevtsy Obshtina collected seven or eight million leva in taxes, but since incorporation with Sofia had only a budget of one million on which to operate. My informant failed to mention that much of this money came from the factory district down on the Sofia plain which had once, much to the dissatisfaction of the

[1] [Cf. p. 58, category III -- Analyst]

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575 178 taken such an interest, had long ceased to have any importance. This was also true of the Union for Protection of Children, which had had as its chief function the provision of school lunches for the poor children. The Association for the Decoration for Valor was still tottering along, and its members hoped eventually to enroll three or four members who had participated in the recent war. The School Board had become a thing of the past as the control of the school passed into the hands of the Sofia School System. The Church Board, however, was maintaining its existence and was giving its support to a new organization called the Christian Union which had been founded during the Fascist regime as a religious welfare organization. Before the coming of the Russians this Christian Union had collected and distributed to the poor families at Christmas time and the New Year an amount varying from sixty to seventy thousand leva. In 1945 it boasted about seventy-five members and was flourishing.

For the most part, however, the village organizations died at birth or perished in early infancy, as an earlier chapter showed. The [596] Dragalevtsy peasant had not yet become a joiner.[1] He gained his social status by the position his family held rather than by the numbers and types of organizations to which he, as an individual, was elected.

● 183 178 Such, then, was the prelude to Communism. The coming of the National State to the village back in 1934 set a pattern by which each peasant household was later on closely geared in with a totalitarian wartime economy. The majority of traditions were holding firm among the middle-aged and old, while many of the younger people no longer disguised their interest in the fascinating ways of the West. The net effect of the war was to commercialize more fully the village's economic life and make the peasants more money-conscious. Their incorporation into the Sofia municipality as well as the Fascist nature of their state made them feel less responsible as individuals for governmental affairs and drew them farther away from the democratic Slavic tradition inherent in their old joint family system. Religion continued to be accepted as a matter of course, for no one questioned the propriety of having a priest officiate on ceremonial or patriotic occasions.

[1] [As of 1945 -- Analyst]